

October 2024

Emergent Literacy Coaching Programs: Evidence Review Snapshot

SUMMARY OF THE RIGOROUS RESEARCH ON EMERGENT LITERACY COACHING PROGRAMS

Emergent literacy refers to those skills that infants and toddlers need to develop before they can learn to read and write effectively. These skills include expanding vocabulary, gaining print knowledge, and understanding letter-sound connections, all of which are critical for school readiness. Emergent literacy coaching programs provide parents with education and training on how to promote children's emergent literacy skills. Coaching focuses on increasing conversational turns between parents and children, improving the quantity and quality of parent talk, and encouraging children to participate in conversations. These coaching strategies are linked with subsequent emergent literacy skills development and overall school readiness.



EMERGING EVIDENCE FOR IMPACTS ON CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING

The two most prominent and widely studied emergent literacy coaching programs are, (1) Language Environment Analysis (LENA) Start and (2) Tune In, Talk More, Take Turns (3Ts)-Home Visiting. These programs can improve nurturing and responsive child-parent relationships: families engage in more conversations, children start to talk more, and parents become more knowledgeable about early childhood development and show more positive parenting skills.

LENA Start targets families with infants, toddlers and sometimes, preschoolers. All parents with children from birth to age 3 are eligible to participate, if the families are already part of an organization (e.g., school district) that implements LENA Start. During the program, families use LENA technology, a speech tracking device, to measure conversational turns, parent speech, and child speech. LENA Start includes 10 weekly parent coaching sessions that are delivered in a group setting. The coach and families explore the weekly data provided by the LENA speech tracking device and discuss strategies to increase conversational turns and to improve home language environments. Since LENA Start was launched in 2015, more than 13,000 families have been coached through this program.

3Ts-Home Visiting was developed by the TMW Center for Early Learning + Public Health at the University of Chicago. It includes 12 coaching sessions, which take place every other week at home. Throughout the program, the home visitor guides the parent through a series of modules that teach participating parents how to create rich language environments and encourage children to participate in conversations. The program also offers booster sessions after parents have completed the first 12 sessions, with similar training components, to help parents refresh their skills.

Although no states actively support emergent literacy coaching programs for parents, states can support emergent literacy coaching programs by funding programs directly or partnering with community organizations that implement these programs.

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

The Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center at Vanderbilt University analyzes rigorous evidence to determine which policies are proven to produce positive outcomes for young children, their families, and society. Our comprehensive review of evidence demonstrates that emergent literacy coaching programs can promote nurturing and responsive child-parent relationships by bolstering parent-child conversational turns, improving parental speech quantity and quality, and increasing child-initiated conversations.

RIGOROUS STUDIES FIND THE FOLLOWING IMPACTS

Emergent literacy coaching programs helps families build more nurturing and responsive child-parent relationships.

- Families increased parent-child conversational turns by 31.4%
- Children increased the number of words spoken throughout the day by 39.4%
- Parents improved their language quality and knowledge of early childhood development
- Parents demonstrated more supportive parenting during playtime

For more information on Emergent Literacy Coaching Programs:

- For more information and citations for the above-referenced studies, please refer to our comprehensive Evidence Review on Emergent Literacy Coaching Programs: <https://pn3policy.org/policyclearinghouse/emergent-literacy-coaching-programs/>.